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REMARKS

The foregoing amendment is made in response to Examiner Janvier's suggestion that Claims 55-57 were directed to a distinct species. Claims 38-56 and 58 are now pending.

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Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO CLAIMS

55. (Amended) A method of providing an incentive for participant action by participants [in a game] engage in an activity pursuant to which participants earn points, and a record of the [game] point total for each participant [in the program] is maintained, the [game] point total reflecting the points earned by the participant [playing the game] engaged in the activity, the method comprising:

providing an incentive program pursuant to which participants in the incentive program are assigned a redemption rate and the redemption rate assigned to each participant is adjusted in response to participant action and wherein the redemption rate associated with a participant determines the redemption value of the [game] point total associated with that participant such that the redemption value for two participants having an identical [game] point total can be different as a consequence of participant action in the incentive program.

56. (Amended) The method of Claim 55, wherein [the game is a casino game and] the incentive program is used to encourage the participants [layer to play] to participate in the activity frequently, and comprising the method further determining [providing a timer that determines] whether a predetermined time period has elapsed between consecutive [play of the casino game] participation and wherein:

if the player has a positive credit [winnings] point balance, the redemption rate is increased by predetermined amount every time the [player plays] participant participates within the predetermined time period;

if the player has a negative [credit winnings] point balance then the redemption rate is decreased by predetermined amount every time the [player plays] participant participates within the predetermined time period;

if the player has a positive [credit winnings] point balance, the redemption rate is decreased by predetermined amount whenever the predetermined time period interval has passed without the [player playing] participant participating; and

if the player has a negative [credit winnings] point balance then the redemption rate is increased by predetermined amount whenever the predetermined time period interval has passed without the [player playing] participant participating.

57. (Delete)

58. (New) The method of Claim 55, wherein the incentive program is used to encourage participant loyalty to a particular merchant.